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UNCLAS ABU DHABI 000303

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP; NEA/PPD; NEA/RA; INR/R/MR; PA;  
INR/NESA; INR/B; IIP/G/NEA-SA  
WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE; NSC  
SECDEF FOR OASD/PA  
USCINCCENT FOR POLAD  
LONDON FOR MCKUNE

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: PALESTINIANS AND DEMOCRACY

1. SUMMARY: "AL-KHALEEJ" WONDERED WHY THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE INSIST ON PUNISHING ALL THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE WHEN ALL THEY DID WAS PRACTICING DEMOCRACY. AN EDITORIAL IN "AL-BAYAN" CALLED ON PALESTINIANS TO LOOK FORWARD TOWARD A BETTER FUTURE AND FORGET THEIR POLITICAL DIFFERENCES. END SUMMARY.

2. Under the headline "Punishing Palestinians for their democracy", Sharjah-based Pan-Arab daily "Al Khaleej," (circulation 85,000) 1/29 editorialized:

"Why does the United States and Europe insist on the collective punishment of the Palestinian people, when all they did was practice democracy... This proves the fact that West's slogans of democracy, freedom, and human rights are nothing but bridges to fulfilling Western interests and mainly the Zionist ones..."

3. Under the headline "Moderation. and the ease of transformation", Dubai-based Arabic daily "Al Bayan," (circulation 90,000) 1/30 wrote:

"...The Fatah Movement ponders a moment of criticism and revision. After all, it is her right and duty to do so. Hamas however is living a moment of ecstasy and is also entitled to do this. These two movements should not necessarily conflict with each other as both of them stand against the same face of occupation. If the elections separated them from each other, what will group them together is something stronger and it should be so. The occupying bulldozer does not differentiate between Palestinian houses nor does it recognize the walls' line. The Palestinian situation is in a state of confusion as a result of the election results and is at its best foggy. Moving into a new chapter requires the same transparency that governed the recent elections, and no Palestinian should accept less."

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